

A P R I L 2 0 1 0

Brookwood Community Farm CSA Newsletter

Field Notes

So it looks like spring. The torrential rains from earlier this month has become a memory with the field dried out and early planting in full force. Peas and carrots, radishes, beets, and salad mix are all coming up and growing strong along with other spring favorites like spinach and kale (yes I know few things are more exciting than kale).

The planting in the fields is coming along and the greenhouse is filling up after being emptied once already. April is a huge month for starting seeds for us, and I thought it would be nice to try to explain our overall goals and theories in selecting seed, and transplants, as well as the policies that we use in their selection.

First off, we grow all of our own transplants. We use seeds that are untreated, and use organic seed when available and not more than twice the price of conventional seeds.

Coming Soon!

- Salad mix
- Pac Choi
- Pea greens
- Spinach
- Radishes



Save the Date!

Saturday, May 22nd

Pancake Breakfast and Plant Sale
(9am-11am) (11am-1pm)

Come down to the farm and get all your spring seedlings from tomatoes to herbs to flowers and everything in between! Kick off the 2010 season with some freshly cooked pancakes and a chance to meet the Brookwood farmers. If you would like to help set up, cook, organize, or clean up, contact: info@brookwoodcommunityfarm.org

May Volunteer Days

Come out to help us every
Tuesdays and Thursdays
mornings from 9am – noon!
Thank you!

Questions? Contact Anna at
volunteer@brookwoodcommunityfarm.org

Field Notes cont.

We use organic potting soil from McEnroe compost, and minimal heat in the production of transplants. We do this to first ensure the quality of our transplants but also so that we are better able to select climate appropriate varieties and to control the production schedule. This also reduces the chance of disease exposure due to plants being shipped across the country, as was the case with the late blight on tomatoes from last year.

I'm going to use this point to mention our plant sale. We will be having it on Saturday, May 22nd, and all of the plants have been grown by us using organic methods. We're putting a great deal of time into the plant sale, I believe the quality will be excellent and the plant varieties will be better adapted to this region. There will also be truly exceptional varieties that will be difficult to find in other places such as heirloom tomatoes, Asian eggplants, and Patty pan squash.

The seeds we order come from two sources with very few exceptions. The first is Fedco seeds, my favorite seed supplier. Fedco is based in Waterville, ME and is a cooperative that has signed the safe seed pledge, which means they do not sell Monsanto/Seminis varieties; they attempt to have large selections of open pollinated seeds, organic seeds; and they buy from small producers. The second is Johnny's selected seeds, which are also out of Maine. Johnny's is a worker-owned company, with a focus on organic seeds adapted to the Northeast. Johnny's does sell some Monsanto varieties, though we do not purchase them.

GMO's and me. I'm a purest about genetically engineered seeds - I hate them. I won't grow them, and I don't believe they are necessary. Then again, I don't grow corn, wheat, rice, or soy beans. We don't use genetically engineered seeds, and we don't buy from any company that knowingly sells genetically engineered seeds. We only buy from producers who have signed the safe seed pledge.

The issue of Monsanto is a challenge. I don't like their practices, and think their model of agriculture represents things I strongly disagree with. For that reason we do not buy any seeds from them or their subsidiary company, Seminis. In the past we have purchased their seeds, some of which were very good. They do have some excellent varieties that I will miss growing, however I have a desire not to do business with them. If you are interested in a further explanation, Fedco seeds wrote about their decision to drop Monsanto seeds:

<http://www.fedcoseeds.com/seeds/monsanto.htm>

Hybrid vs. open pollinated seeds. Hybrid seeds are seeds from plants that were artificially cross pollinated. In general, they have greater uniformity production and disease resistance. The seeds from these plants do not reliably reproduce the hybrid plant. I like hybrid seeds for many plants, a theory which many disagree with me on. In general, they produce larger quantities and of a better consistency - particularly for things like red peppers. The loss of genetic diversity in the seed bank through hybridization and multinational seed suppliers is a concern. Hybrids are often lacking in things such as flavor, so for tomatoes I'm sticking to heirlooms. And as a general rule, I try to have a combination of hybrid and heirloom seeds for most crops, to obtain both consistency and some of the weird varieties that I enjoy.

Anyhow, if you have questions or comments, please feel free to get back to me.

On a parting note, the volunteer help we have received this year has really been a huge help to us so I want to thank everyone for coming out. We will continue to send out volunteer notices, and try to get them out slightly earlier than we have been. Once again, thank you for helping out.

- Jason

News!

- **Special Volunteer Work Times in MAY!!**
 - "Late afternoons with Jason"
 - May 13th and 27th at 4:30pm
 - "Early birds with Judy"
 - May 8th at 6:30am

QUESTIONS about volunteering? Email Anna at volunteer@brookwood...
- **SPRING Shares are starting early!**
Come NEXT week on 5/14 or 5/15 at the red barn. Regular pickup times:
 - Fridays 2-5pm
 - Saturdays 9am-12pm
- **Egg Shares STARTS this Friday 5/7**
Pick up your eggs in the coolers at the red barn at the same pickup times as the spring shares above.
QUESTIONS about share pickups?
Email us brookwoodfarmer@gmail.com
- **Have experience in bookkeeping?** BCF is looking for someone to work 2 hours a week for \$25/hr. It's a perfect job for someone interested in supporting our administrative work! Please contact our wonderful CSA and board member, Helen, hrussell03@gmail.com
- **Calling all writers and photographers!!**
We want your farm/food/nature poetry, creative writing, and photo submissions! Also, if you're interested in writing a blurb for our upcoming weekly CSA newsletters about your farm experience – either as a CSA member or volunteer, please email us at brookwood.newsletter@gmail.com
- **New equipment additions on the farm:**
Porta-potty, yellow farm truck, and walk-in cooler!

ALOHA from your new Assistant Grower!



I wish I was in Hawaii but I'm a fan of their greeting so I am borrowing it in hopes to bring you warm feelings. Words cannot express the excitement I have for another farming season. I've had the fortunate opportunity to learn about agriculture at various farms in the Northeast since the summer of 2007, when I began as an intern at Waltham Fields Community Farm in Waltham, MA. It was there where I began my reconnection with my food, my farmers, my community, and the land.

Growing food has become a natural passion for me and I am thrilled to be a new addition to your farm at Brookwood! Fresh out of Mount Holyoke College since last May, I graduated with a degree in Environmental Studies and a minor in Spanish. Although I hope to eventually combine sustainable agriculture with nutrition, the environment, and education, I'm currently doing what I love. I love that I continuously learn and discover on the farm – such as the different methods of growing or harvesting, new ways of cooking a vegetable, identifying the surrounding flora and fauna, and sharing personal stories.

Choosing favorite vegetables is nearly impossible as a farmer, but I guess if I had to choose, I would say: husk cherries, Asian greens, Sungold cherry tomatoes, sweet carrots, garlic, and broccoli. With the right ingredients, I make pretty good rhubarb bread and I'll never refuse pesto, wild berries, green eggs, cheese, and a good backrub. When I'm not farming, I'm fiddling, singing, writing, and dancing. I'm feasting on what the farm grows. I try to keep up my book list. I'm observing, admiring, and laughing. I try to spend time in the mountains. And I'm getting to know all of you. Looking forward to sharing this season with you and I'll see you in the fields!

- Anna

Food For the Soul

The Farm (II - Spring)

By measured pace - glacial slow,
Heat and light both daily grow.
Snow and ice are first to go.
A rapid melt does mud bestow.

Buds and shoots begin to sprout.
Vivid flowers their colors shout.
Bugs and birds are all about.
Spring's arrived- there is no doubt.

Trees and shrubs complete the scene.
What was gray has morphed to green.
Romance lurks as creatures preen.
Mating dances gone unseen.

Nesting instincts upwards soar.
Existing hollows ease the chore.
Urgent needs not to ignore- -
What was two will soon be four.

Birthing's quite a varied thing.
Some will bark and others sing.
Newborns each will rightly bring.
Closure to the cycle's ring.

- Charley West



Recipe of the Month

Have a recipe you'd like to share with CSA members? Email it to us at brookwood.newsletter@gmail.com



Asparagus Quiche

Recipe source: *Simply in Season* by Mary Beth Lind and Cathleen Hockman-Wert

INGREDIENTS

Egg-milk mixture:

3 eggs
1 cup evaporated milk
1/4 tsp salt
1/4 tsp pepper

Asparagus filling:

1-1 1/2 cups asparagus (cooked and chopped)
1 cup shredded Swiss cheese
1/2 cup crumbled bacon OR diced cooked ham
1/4 cup green onion or onion chopped
1 tbsp fresh rosemary (chopped or 1 tsp dried)
OR 1/4 cup fresh dill (chopped)

9-inch/1L pie crumb crust:

1/3 cup flour
1/3 cup whole wheat pastry flour
1/3 cup cornmeal
1/2 tsp salt
1/4 tsp baking powder
1/3 cup butter
fresh or dried herbs (to taste; optional)

DIRECTIONS

- 1) For crumb crust: Lightly mix together dry ingredients. Cut in butter until crumbly. Pat firmly into bottom and sides of 9-inch pie pan, adding a little water if needed to stick together.
- 2) Mix egg-milk mixture first. Then in a separate bowl, prepare the asparagus mixture.
- 3) Pour asparagus filling into the crust first, top it with the egg-milk mixture and ending with a sprinkle of reserved cheese.
- 4) Bake in preheated oven at 425F/220C for 15 minutes. Reduce heat to 350F/180C and bake until browned on top and set in the middle, another 25-30 minutes.
- 5) Allow to cool for 10-15 minutes before cutting and serving. Serves 4-6.